

BULLETIN
OF THE
BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

Volume 85

Number 4

Published: 2nd April 1965

The six hundred and twenty-fourth meeting of the Club was held at the Rembrandt Hotel, London, on 16th March, 1965

Chairman: Mr. R. S. R. Fitter

Members present 25; Guests 10.

Mr. C. Mead spoke on Sand Martins, explaining some of the results obtained through a large scale ringing programme organised by the British Trust for Ornithology in which ringers in this country and elsewhere co-operated.

**On the type-locality of *Campethera abingoni abingoni*
(Smith), 1836**

by P. A. CLANCEY

Received 9th November, 1964

It is generally agreed among systematists that Dr. Andrew Smith described his *Chrysoptilus Abingoni* on the basis of specimens obtained near Port Natal, *i.e.*, Durban, Natal, in the year 1832. However, reference to the original description of this woodpecker in the *Rep. Exped. Explor. Cent. Afr.*, 1836, p. 53, reveals that this is not so and that the generally adopted type-locality is completely erroneous. After introducing the name *Chrysoptilus Abingoni*, Smith gives an accurate description of the male, completing his original diagnosis with "Length $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Occurs in the same localities with the last." Now, the "last" in this instance refers to the species described immediately above *C. abingoni*, namely *Chrysoptilus Bennettii* (= *Campethera bennettii bennettii* [Smith] of modern usage), which "inhabits the country about and beyond Kurrichaine," *i.e.*, the Zeerust district of the western Transvaal. Arising from this observation, it is clear that the correct type-locality of the nominate race of *C. campethera* is the Zeerust district of the western Transvaal, and not Durban, Natal. The mistaken belief that the paratypical material of the Golden-tailed Woodpecker came from Durban arose from the fact that immediately below the original

diagnosis appears a footnote, stating, "Specimens of this species were obtained near Port Natal in 1832," which, when taken in conjunction with the geographical ascription of "the country about and beyond Kurrichaine" in the description, implies that when describing the species Smith had seen material from both Natal and the western Transvaal. The 1836 description is, however, quite unequivocal and refers to the western Transvaal population and not that of Natal.

The above finding necessitates two changes of name to South African forms of the Golden-tailed Woodpecker as laid down in my revision of these in *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club.*, vol. 79, 5, 1959, pp. 70-78. Form (c) of my revision becomes the nominate race, with *Picus (Chrysoptilopicus) Smithii* Malherbe, 1845, an absolute synonym, and for form (a) a name is required. For the innominate austral subspecies I propose

Campethera abingoni constricta, nom. nov.

pro. C. a. abingoni (Smith) of Clancey, *loc. cit.*, et auctorum, nec Smith, 1836. *Type* from Gillitts, near Kloof, Natal, alt. c. 2000 ft. a.s.l. 25th April, 1953; collected by B. B. Rawdon. In the collection of the Durban Museum, Reg. No. 12987. Wing 111 mm.

The name chosen is descriptive of the narrowed and constricted nature of the lower throat and pectoral striae as compared with those of the nominotypical subspecies.

A further case of dwarfism in a pheasant

by J. S. ASH

Received 4th January, 1965

An example of a dwarf cock Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*) from Oundle, Northamptonshire, has been described in this journal (Ash, 1961). Another rather similar bird was shot on about 19th December, 1964, on the Portway Estates, near Whitchurch, Hampshire, and sent to the Game Research Association for examination through the kindness of Mr. A. A. L. Wills.

Like the earlier bird there was no evidence of disease or injury, the testes were normal in appearance and there were good deposits of subcutaneous and visceral fat. There was no evidence of emaciation. Its standard measurements are compared with those given from *The Handbook of British Birds* and for the Oundle bird cited above:—

	Measurements in mm.		
	<i>The Handbook</i>	<i>Oundle bird</i>	<i>Whitchurch</i>
Wing	235-260	219	215 and 216
Tarsus	60- 78	50	45 and 45
Bill (from feathers)	28- 32	26	21.5
Tail (central)	420-520	419	356
<hr/>			
Weight in gms.	1394	510.3	426.5

Based on wing moult the present bird was 17-18 weeks of age (1st primary = 98 mm.; longest (4th) primary = 162 mm.) which means it was a very late hatched bird in the third week of August. If the possibility is taken into account that late hatched birds develop more slowly the hatching date would almost certainly still have been some time in August.